

NARAYANA GURU

IT WAS A DAY OF FESTIVITIES IN A SMALL TOWN IN KERALA. WORSHIP WAS GOING ON AT A TEMPLE. THE VILLAGERS STOOD IN A SET PATTERN.



INSIDE, FOREMOST, STOOD THE PRIESTLY CLASS, CLOSEST TO THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM.



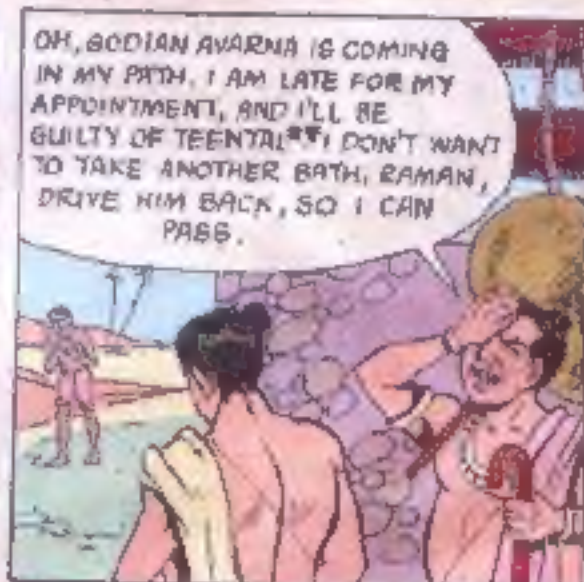
NEXT TO THIS CIRCLE OF THE PRIVILEGED CLASS STOOD MEMBERS BELONGING TO THE NON-BRAHMAN CASTE HINDUS.

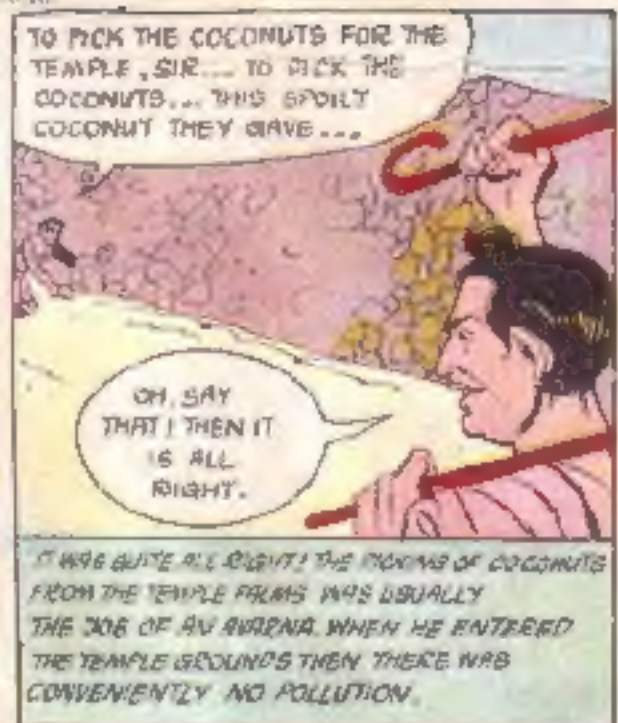


THE MAJORITY OF DEVOTEES STOOD OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE. THEY WERE THE SO-CALLED "AVARNAS".



■ LITERALLY "WITHOUT CASTE" AS OPPOSED TO CASTE HINDUS OR "SAVARNAS" WHO ARE DIVIDED INTO FOUR CASTES.





THUS, OSTRACIZED ALMOST EVERYWHERE, THE "AYTHANS" LIVED IN ISOLATION ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE OR TOWN.



THE HORROR OF IT ALL HAD FILLED SWAMI VIVEKANANDA WITH LOATHING, WHEN HE HAD HEARD ABOUT IT.



THOSE CONSIDERED LOWEST AMONG THE "AYTHANS" (THE ADIVASIS) HAD TO LIVE IN THE FOREST.



THEY WERE CONSIDERED DEFILING AND THEY LED DEFILED LIVES.



THEY WERE CONSIDERED FILTH, AND THEY LET FILTH COLLECT AROUND THEM.



TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT BY THE CASTE HINDUS, IT WAS NATURAL FOR THE AYARNAS TO WORSHIP DEITIES THAT HAD CRUEL OR FEROCE ASPECTS - KALIDASA, SHASTA, ARUKOLA...



... RHADRAKALI AND CHAMUNDI.



THEY LIVED WRETCHED LIVES AND WERE DEPRIVED EVEN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION. THEIR OFFERINGS TO THEIR GODS AND GODDESSES WERE TODDY, ARRACK AND MEAT.



WOULD THESE MEN WHO LIVED IN THE DARKNESS OF IGNORANCE AND INJUSTICE, EVER KNOW FREEDOM AND JUSTICE?

IN ALL THIS DARKNESS THERE APPEARED A NEW LIGHT.



A CHILD WAS BORN IN THE YEAR 1954 AT CHEMPAZHANTI, A VILLAGE ABOUT 12 KM. NORTH OF TRIVANDRUM —



IT WAS THE DAY AFTER ONAM, THE HARVEST FESTIVAL, WHEN THE HOME-COMING OF MAHABALI IS CELEBRATED. THIS LEGENDARY KING WAS FAMOUS FOR HIS IMPARTIAL RULE OF HIS SUBJECTS WITHOUT THE BARRIERS OF CASTE, RACE OR STATUS.

THE FATHER OF THE CHILD WAS NATAN, A GENTLEMAN FARMER RESPECTFULLY CALLED 'ASAN' BY ALL FOR HIS KNOWLEDGE OF JANMARTI, ASTROLOGY AND AYURVEDA.



THE MOTHER WAS A PRETTY AND SENSITIVE WOMAN CALLED KUTTI — A NAME BEFITTING HER SIMPLICITY AND CHARM.



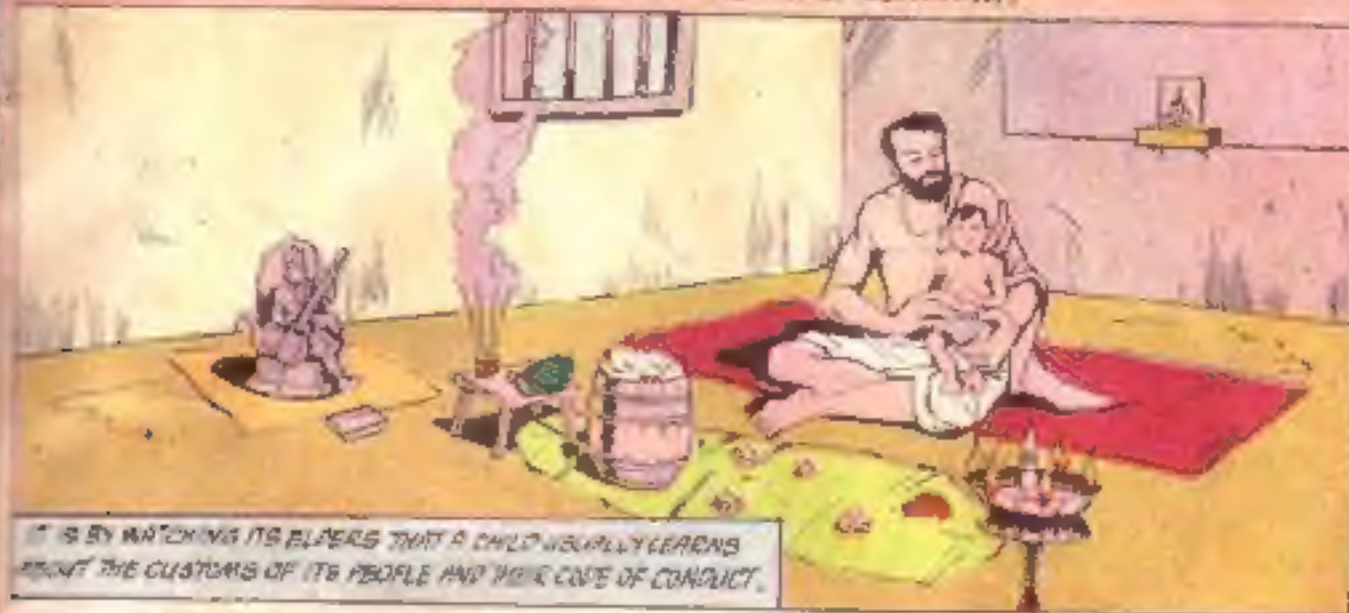
KRISHNAN VADYAR, KUTTI ANNA'S BROTHER, WAS ALSO A SANSKRIT SCHOLAR AND A WELL-KNOWN WADYAR* OF THE PLACE.



KRISHNAN VADYAR CONDUCTED THE NAMING CEREMONY AND 'NADANNA' WAS THE NAME CHOSEN FOR THE CHILD.



ACCORDING TO TRADITION, WHEN THE CHILD WAS FIVE YEARS OLD, MOODTALLA RASU PROSTITUTED HIMSELF SARASWATI AND INITIATED NANU INTO THE RIT OF LEARNING.



IT IS BY WATCHING ITS ELDER THAT A CHILD USUALLY LEARNS ABOUT THE CUSTOMS OF ITS PEOPLE AND THEIR CODE OF CONDUCT.

THE CHILD TOO WATCHED HIS ELDER.



KUTTI AMMA, I ACCIDENTALLY CAME INTO CONTACT WITH A PULAYA. I KEEP MORE THAN THE USUAL WATER READY. I'LL COME INTO THE HOUSE ONLY AFTER I HAVE MY PURIFICATORY BATH.

BUT MAHATMA SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN BORN WITH HIS OWN IDEAS OF INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL CONDUCT.



NANU, ARE YOU CLEAN?

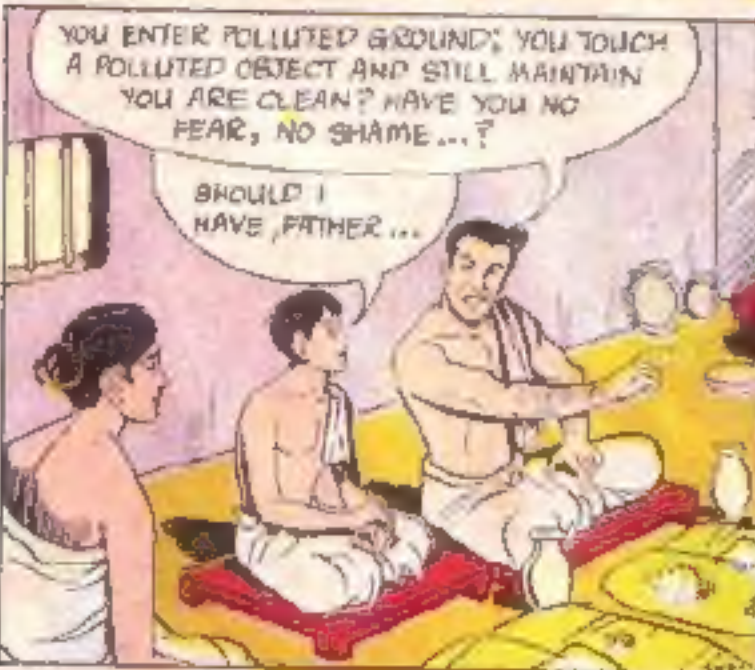
I AM, FATHER.



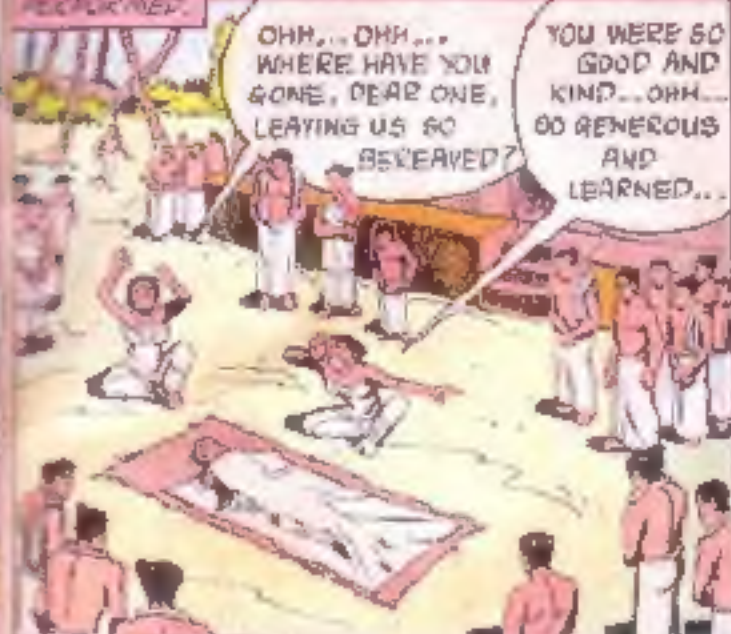
CLEAN? THIS BOY? NONSENSE!

WHO...?





ONE DAY, THERE WAS A DEATH IN NACHANA'S FAMILY. ACCORDING TO CUSTOM, THE KANNOKU RITES WERE PERFORMED.



OHH... OHH... WHERE HAVE YOU GONE, DEAR ONE, LEAVING US SO BEHEAVED?

YOU WERE SO GOOD AND KIND... OHH... SO GENEROUS AND LEARNED...

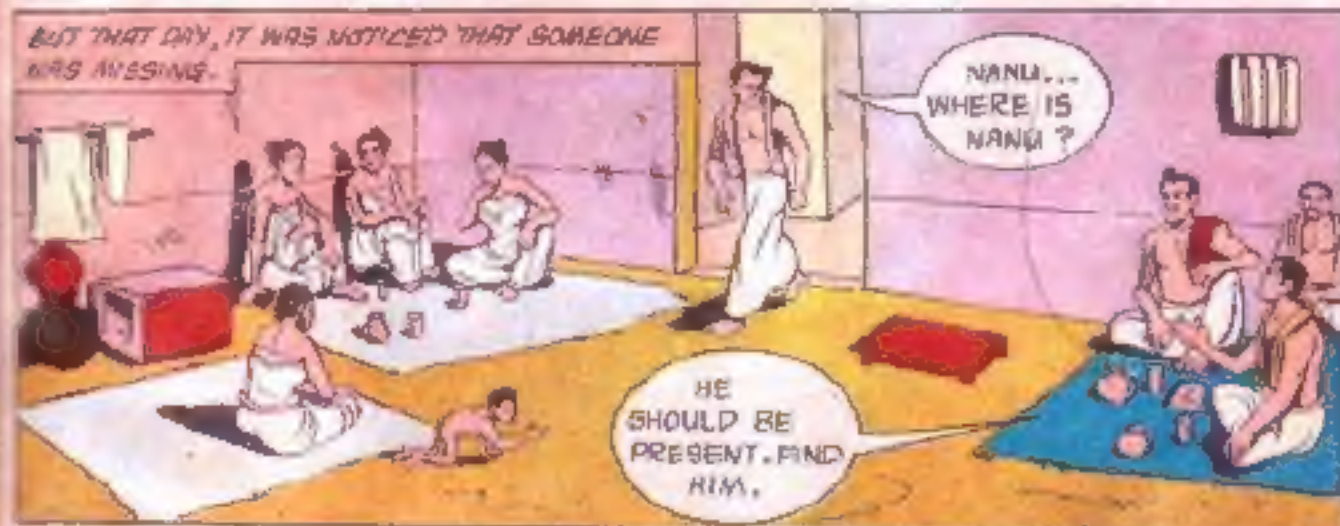
AFTER THE FUNERAL, THE WEeping AND THE GRIEVING SUDDENLY CHANGED INTO MIRTH AND FESTIVITY.



HAVE ANOTHER BETEL-LEAF

HA, HA! I THINK I WILL HAVE YOU HEARD THIS JOKE ABOUT, ...?

BUT THAT DAY, IT WAS NOTICED THAT SOMEONE WAS MISSING.



NANU... WHERE IS NANU?

HE SHOULD BE PRESENT. AND HIM.

AFTER A LONG SEARCH, NACHANA WAS FOUND IN THE FOREST, PONDERING DEEPLY IN SOLITUDE.



YOU SHOULD HAVE TAKEN PART IN THE CEREMONY, NANU. WHY DID YOU KEEP AWAY LIKE THIS?

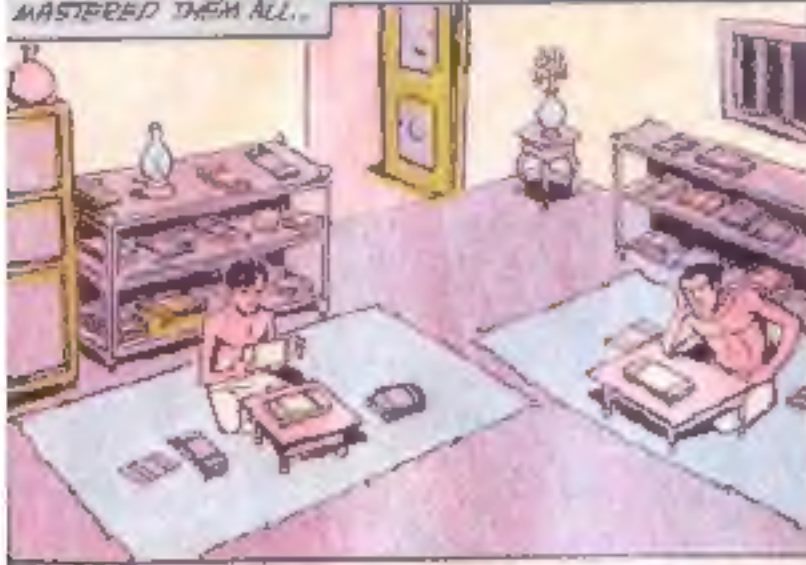


YESTERDAY, THERE WAS WAILING IN THE HOUSE. HOW QUICKLY THIS CHANGED TO FUN AND LAUGHTER! SEEING THAT, I CAME AWAY INTO THE FOREST.



A YOUNG CHILD HAD EXPOSED THE HYPOCRISY OF A CUSTOM.

SOON AFTER, NARAYANA PURSUED HIS STUDIES UNDER HIS MATERNAL UNCLE, KRISHNA VAIKYAR. VAIKYAR HAD MANY RARE BOOKS ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS. NARAYANA MASTERED THEM ALL.



BUT HIS HAND WENT MOST OFTEN TOWARDS BOOKS ON ONE PARTICULAR SUBJECT...



...A SUBJECT THAT REVEALS THE ONENESS OF ALL CREATION. IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A LIFELONG QUEST.

AS HE GREW OLDER, NARAYANA SHOWED SIGNS OF BECOMING A WANDERER, TIRELESSLY WALKING LONG DISTANCES.

THERE GOES YOUR SON AGAIN, KUTTI AMMA.



HE STAYS AWAY FOR DAYS AT A TIME... TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, SON...

ON ONE SUCH OCCASION AWAY FROM HOME, NARAYANA WAS PRAYING AT AN OLD DESERTED TEMPLE, WHEN HIS HEAD BEGAN TO ACHE SEVERELY.



I WONDER - IS THIS THE SYMPTOM OF...? YES, I AM GOING IN FOR AN ATTACK OF SMALLPOX. WHY WORRY THE FAMILY? I WON'T GO HOME.

AND FOR THE NEXT EIGHTEEN DAYS -



ADORATION TO YOU, O MOTHER!

ON THE NINETEENTH DAY, NARAYANA HAD A BATH AND RETURNED HOME.

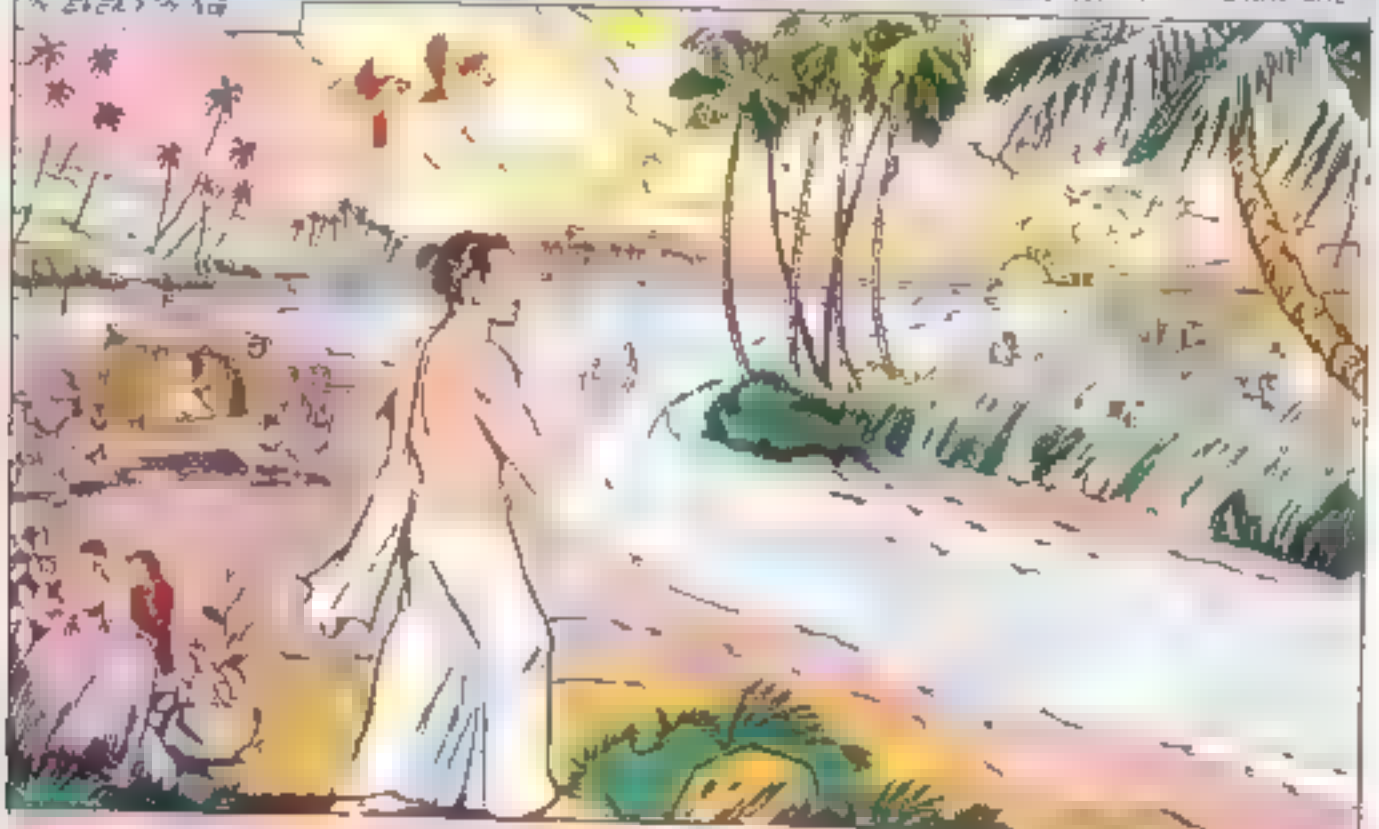
WHY, NARU... THESE SPOTS ON YOUR FACE... ARE MARKS LEFT BY SMALLPOX. WHY DIDN'T YOU COME HOME, THE MOMENT YOU WERE...

I STAYED AT A TEMPLE, UNCLE, TILL I WAS CURED.



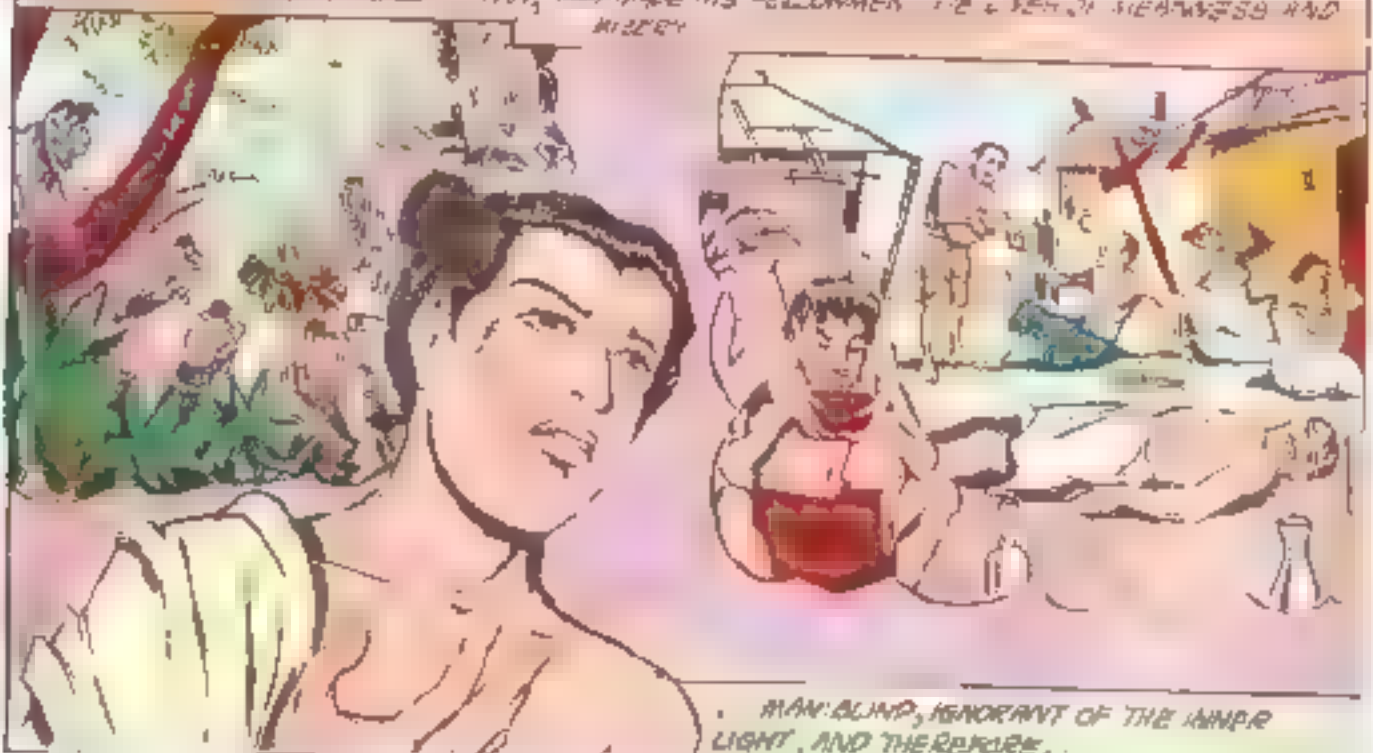


AND IN THE GLOOM OF THE SUNRISE AT NATURAL IN THE GREEN PADDY FIELDS AND COCONUT GROVES IN THE WHITE SHAD OF THE RIVER BANK IN THE FLOWING WATERS AND THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY, ALL MEN FROM THOSE WE CALL RESPECTABLE, TO THOSE WE CALL LOWLY. THE WANDERER BEGAN TO SEE ONE ISN'T EMBRACING ALL THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE AMONG THEM. GOD WAS IN EVERYONE IN EVERYTHING.



AND IN CONTRAST TO HIS RADIANT ONENESS THIS DIVINE BEAUTY THAT INHABITS EACH AND EVERY CREATION OF GOD.

WAS THE OUTWARD NATURE OF MAN, THAT MADE HIS FELLOWMEN TO SUFFER IN WEARINESS AND MISERY.

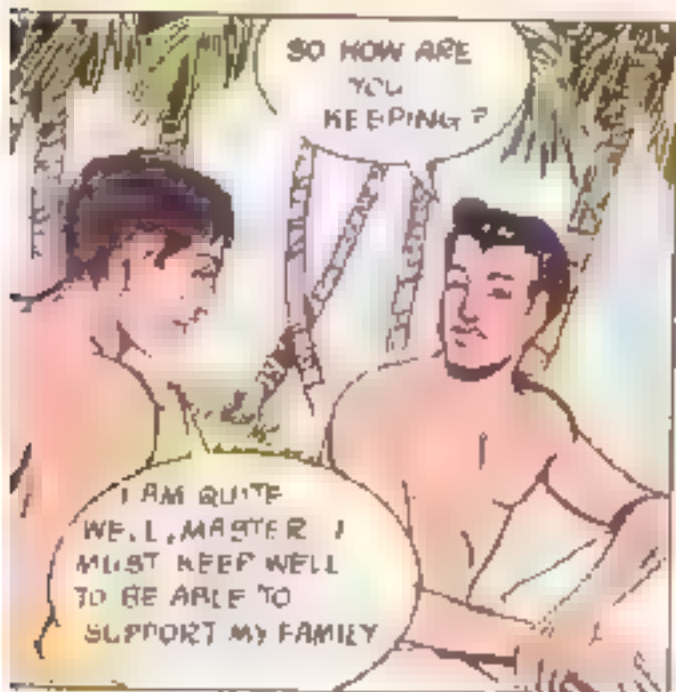
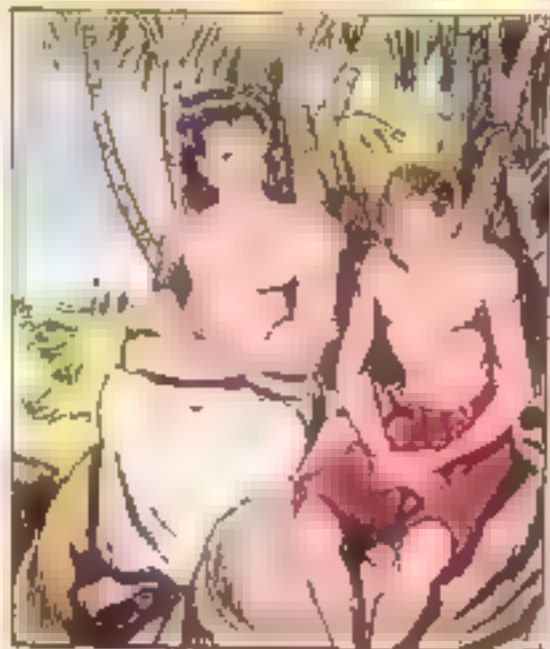
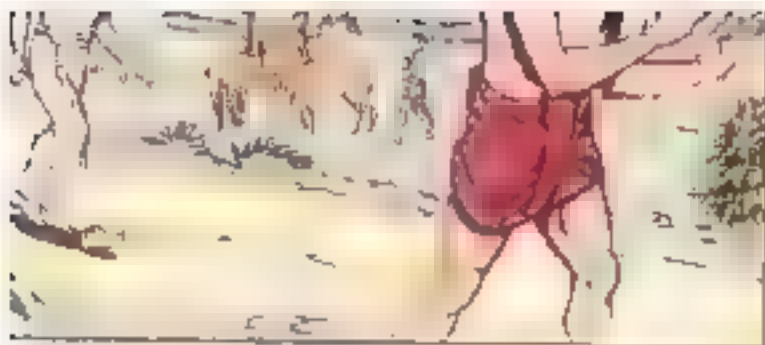


MAN, BLIND, IGNORANT OF THE INNER LIGHT, AND THEREFORE.

FOOLISH, VAIN, GREEDY AND SELFISH



WAS MAN ANY BETTER THAN THIS



AFTER ONE DAY

CHATTAN SEEMED
SILENT AND SAD
FOR MANY DAYS NOW HE
HAS ALTOGETHER STOPPED
COMING FOR HIS USUAL
CHAT.



NARAYANA WENT TO CHATTAN'S EMPLOYER.

S R WHERE IS
CHATTAN THE
COWHERD?
THESE DAYS?

AN YES HE HAS BEEN
AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY
THE POOR FULAYA NOW.
NONE MAY APPROACH HIM,
NOR MAY HE GO NEAR
ANYONE. HE LIVES APART
FROM EVERYBODY AND
ALONE



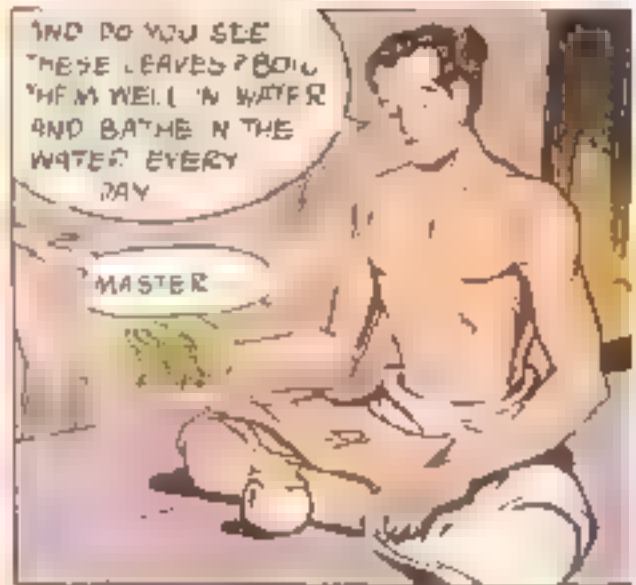
CHATTAN

UH



HOW
ARE YOU
FEELING
NOW?

MASTER
YOU I



TO ERASE THE INJUSTICE OF SOCIAL FEELINGS TO HUNT NARAYANA. HE WANDERED FEELING THE STRESS WITH A FEW OF HIS CLASSMATES, BUT THE NAME OF GOD



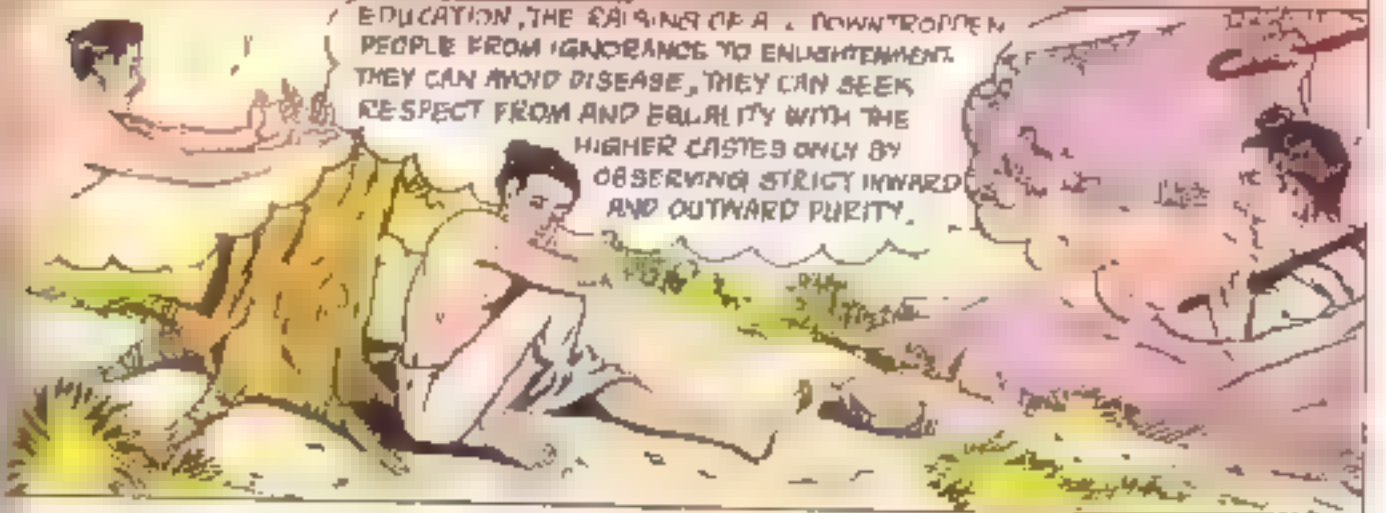
WHEN ONE DAY HIS HEAVY RAINFALL CAUSED HIM TO FALL SERIOUSLY ILL AND HE HAD TO BE BROUGHT HOME TO CHANDRANATH



BUT UNDER HIS SINGAR VEDYAR'S TREATMENT HE WAS SOON WELL AGAIN

HE WENT BACK TO SUZILALI HE HAD WANDERED AND SEARCHED TO HIS FILL IN THE LAND OF STARS NOW THE NEXT STAGE HAD COME—WANDERING IN THE REGIONS OF HINDU BELIEF—AND HIS SON SURROUNDED BY SOLDIERS SLOWLY THE ANSWER BEGAN TO FORM.

EDUCATION, THE RAISING OF A DOWNTROPEN PEOPLE FROM IGNORANCE TO ENLIGHTENMENT. THEY CAN AVOID DISEASE, THEY CAN SEEK RESPECT FROM AND EQUALITY WITH THE HIGHER CASTES ONLY BY OBSERVING STRICT INWARD AND OUTWARD PURITY.



BUT NEARBY THE NARAYANA'S FAMILY HAD ARRANGED HIS MARRIAGE HIS OWN COUSIN'S DAUGHTER HAD BEEN CHOSEN AS THE BRIDE. NARAYANA WAS NOT EVEN PRESENT ON THE DECISION.

NARAYANA ACCEPT THESE CLOTHES, AND NOW, LET ME TAKE MY BROTHER'S BRIDE HOME



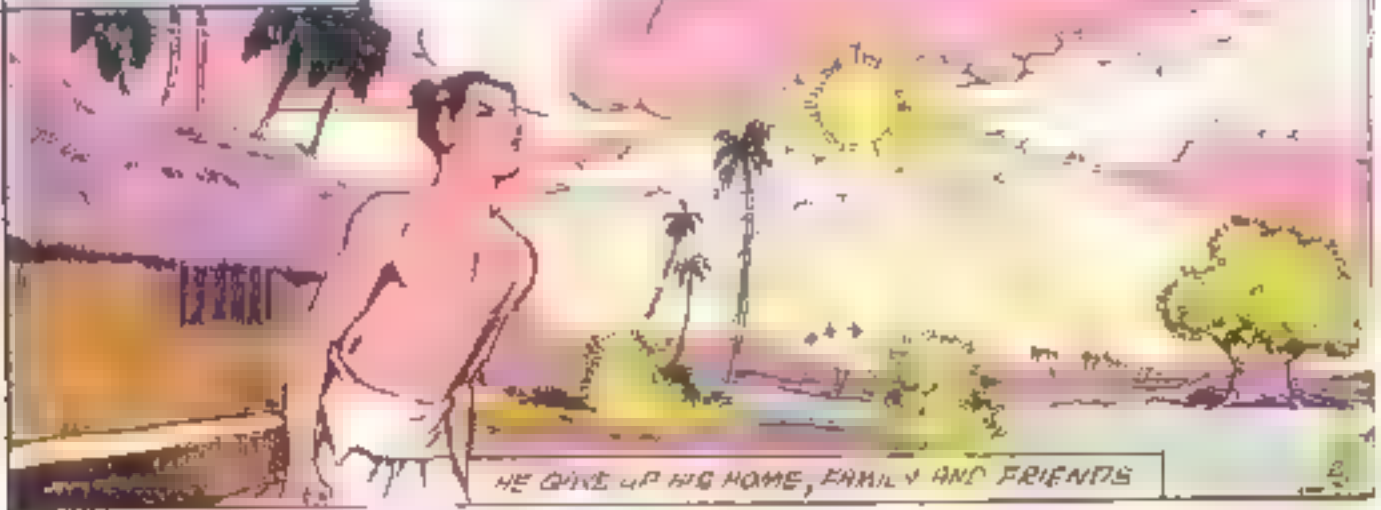
WITH THIS SMALL CEREMONY THE RITUAL OF MARRIAGE WAS OVER

BUT NARAYANA HAD TAKEN UP A GREAT SPIRITUAL TASK HE COULD NOT NOW ALLOW THE DISTRACTIONS OF THE MATERIAL WORLD IT WAS HIS DUTY TO FULFILL

AUNT, UNCLE EVERYONE IS BORN FOR A DEFINITE PURPOSE YOU HAVE YOURS, HAVE MINE YOU MUST FOLLOW YOURS, MUST FOLLOW MINE



TO FORSAKE THE SECURE FAMILIAR WORLD OF LIFE IS NOT EASY IT WAS A SUPREME EFFORT BUT NARAYANA MADE IT

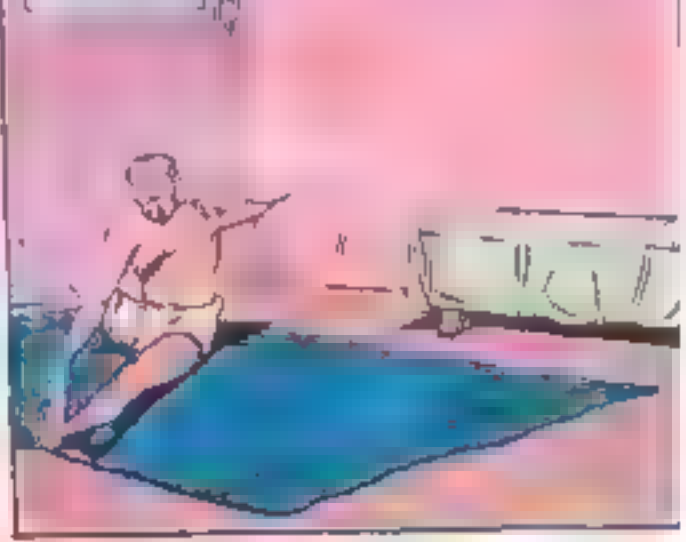


HE GAVE UP HIS HOME, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

HIS PATH CROSSED THOSE OF TWO GREAT MEN NANNAN PILLAI CHATTAMPIL ..



AND CHATTAMPIL SWAMI'S GURU THYCAUD AYYAPPA WHOSE DISCIPLE HE BECAME FOR A WHILE



THEN AGAIN CAME THE DESIRE FOR SOLITUDE AND REFLECTION HE WENT TO THE LONELY FORESTS OF MARUTHA MALAI NEAR NARAYANAPURAM (NOW IN TAMIL NADU) AND BEGAN TO MEDITATE.



HIS FOOD WAS OFTEN THE JUICE OF A HERB THAT WHEN LEFT FOR SOME MINUTES



ALL PIPES A 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100



THOUGH HE MOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE, NOT
ONCE DID HE FEEL FEAR

GOOOW
GOOOW

FEAR ARISE WHEN WE THINK THAT THERE
ARE THINGS IN THIS WORLD OTHER THAN
OURSELVES. WHEN WE KNOW WE ARE VERY
THING CERTAINLY A QUELLED WHERE IS
THE CAUSE OF FEAR? - MATHA GURU

NEVER BEFORE HAD THE YOUNG SWAMI BEEN SO IMPRESSED BY HIMSELF

THEN RECHARGED AND RECHARGED WITH SPIRITUALITY SWAMI RETURNED TO THE WORLD OF MEN HAVING
ATTAINED FULL CERTAINTY ON ALL MATTERS OF SUPREME HUMAN INTEREST. HE WITH HIS MIND AT PEACE
AND HEART AT REST MOVED AMONG THE PEOPLE SHARING THEIR LIVES INSPIRING THEIR DEVOTION AND LOVE.



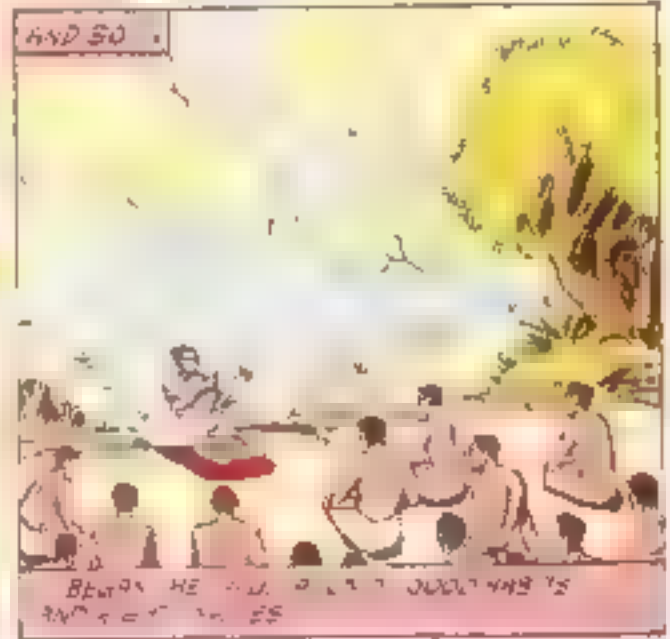
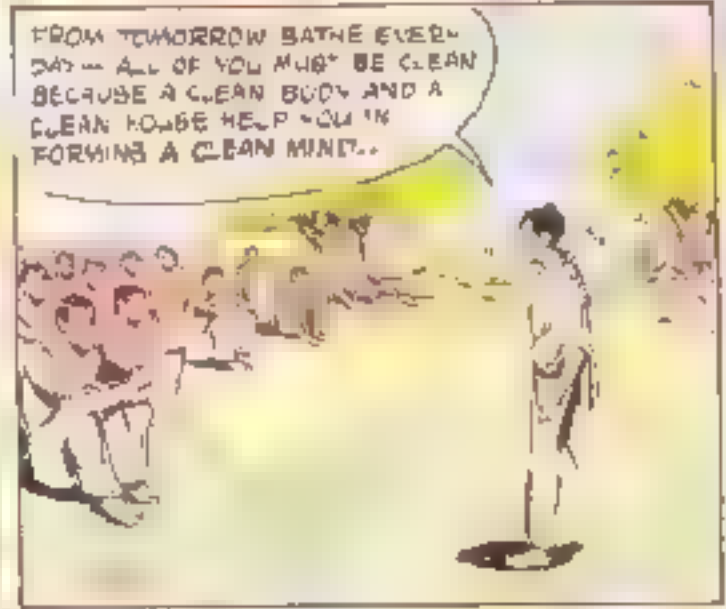
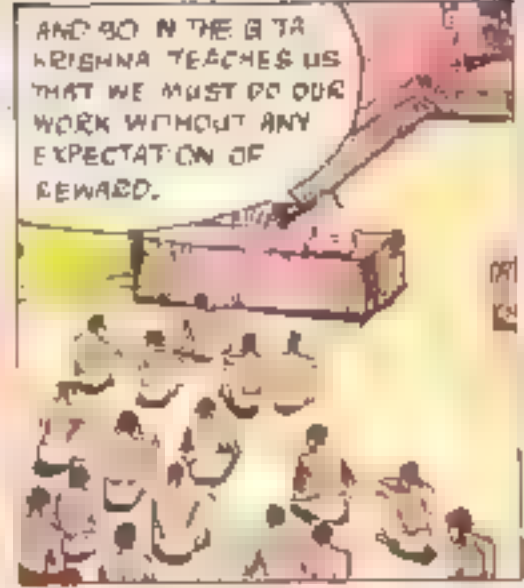
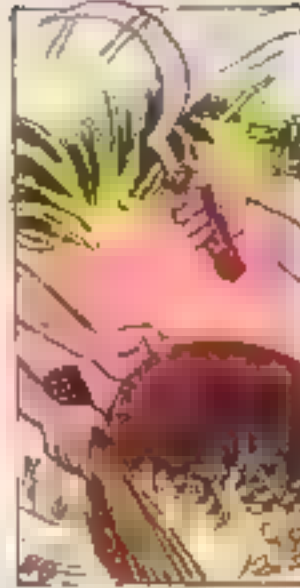
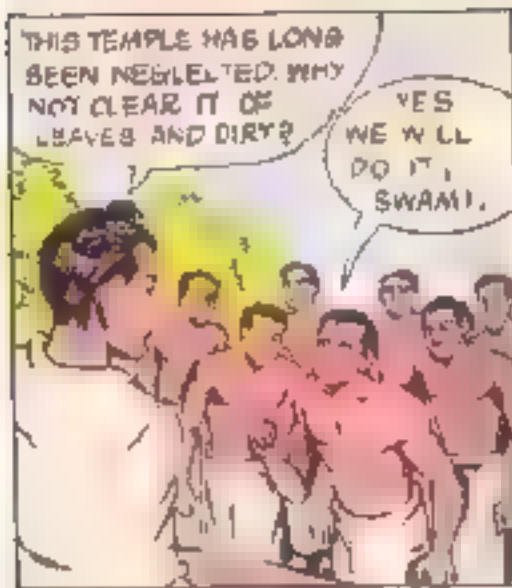
PLACE YOUR HANDS ON
OUR NETS SWAMI WE WILL
GET A BETTER CATCH
WITH YOUR
BLESSINGS

HE WANDERED NOW WANDERED ABOUT WITH A MISSION TO FULFILL HE MOVED FROM TEMPLE TO TEMPLE
LIVING FOR A FEW DAYS IN ONE SPENDING A MONTH IN ANOTHER WHEREVER HE WENT, VISITORS WERE
ATTRACTION BY THE CONFIDENCE AND WISDOM THAT SHONE FROM HIS FACE

SWAMI PLEASE
ACCEPT THIS
FRUIT

IT MUST BE
FROM YOUR
OWN GARDEN
IT IS A KIND
OF YOU





WHICHEVER PLACE NARAYANA VISITED IN HIS WANDERINGS HE LEFT IT CLEANER THAN HE FOUND IT. IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE HE MET, HE SOWN THE SEEDS OF HIGHER THOUGHTS AND BETTER LIVES



AND, ONE DAY HE ARRIVED AT ARUVIPULAM, NINETEEN KM FROM TRIVANDRUM

HERE TOO, ATTRACTED BY HIS MAGNETISM, SEVERAL PEOPLE CAME TO SEE HIM. SOON ENOUGH, SOME OF THE DEVOTEES BEGAN TO BRING THEIR PROBLEMS TO HIM.

SWAMI, I FEEL UNWELL, I CANNOT SLEEP AT NIGHT.

HERE ARE SOME HERBS EVERY NIGHT TAKE A DRAUGHT MADE FROM THEM, YOU WILL GET RELIEF



SWAMI'S SIMPLE AYURVEDIC MEDICATIONS EFFECTED MANY CURES. HIS FAME SPREAD FAR AND FAST.

AS A RESULT OF HIS INFLUENCE, AN ATMOSPHERE OF HARMONY AND PEACE PERVADED ARUVIPULAM

SWAMI, MEETING YOU IS LIKE COMING ON A PILGRIMAGE OF PEACE.

THEN WE WILL HAVE A TEMPLE HERE IT WILL ENCOURAGE MORE PEOPLE TO GATHER AND SPEAK AND THINK ABOUT GOOD THINGS LET US BE NAUGURATED ON SIVARATHRI *



AND A TEMPLE SPRANG UP SPONTANEOUSLY ON THAT SPOT; A TEMPLE QUITE UNLIKE THE TYPICAL TEMPLE OF THE DAY. THERE WERE NO TALL ENVELOPING WALLS TO EXCLUDE A CERTAIN SECTION OF SOCIETY



NO DISTANT, INACCESSIBLE ALIEN AT THE END OF A MYSTERIOUS AND DARK CORRIDOR



NO ELABORATE DECORATIONS AND ENLIGHTENMENTS TO DISTRACT THE EYE FROM THE MAIN GOD-HEAD

... NO RIGH OFFERINGS THAT ENCOURAGE CORRUPTION IN THE HOUSES OF GOD



IT WAS A FAR-FROM-ORDINARY TEMPLE



THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE TEMPLE INSTITUTION HAD BEGUN

THEN IT WAS SINGAPORE CROWDS OF PEOPLE THROGGED THE TEMPLE SITE. AS THE HOLY HOUR OF MIDNIGHT APPROACHED A GURU DESCENDED ON THE PEOPLE...



AS THE GURU WADING INTO THE RIVER, PICKED UP A STONE FROM THE RIVER BED

AND, TO THE CHANTING OF MANTRAS, HE INSTALLED IT ON THE ALTAR



THE SIMPLE STONE PICKED UP FROM THE RIVER BED, SYMBOLISED THE OMNIPRESENT NATURE OF GOD, WHICH THE SWAMI HAD REALISED DURING THE COURSE OF HIS MEDITATIONS

PEOPLE ACCLAIMED SWAMI AS THE GURU HE HIMSELF SIGNED ALL HIS LETTERS AND MESSAGES AS "EZHAVA GURU" BECAUSE AN OVADA HE HAD INSTALLED THE STONE ON THE ALTAR AT ADUTHAN AND THUS GAVE SOMETHING NEW BEFORE. LATER WHEN HE CAME TO LEARN THAT THE LOCAL ARYANAS WERE DISPLEASED WITH HIS REERING OF "KANTHAN", HE SAID -

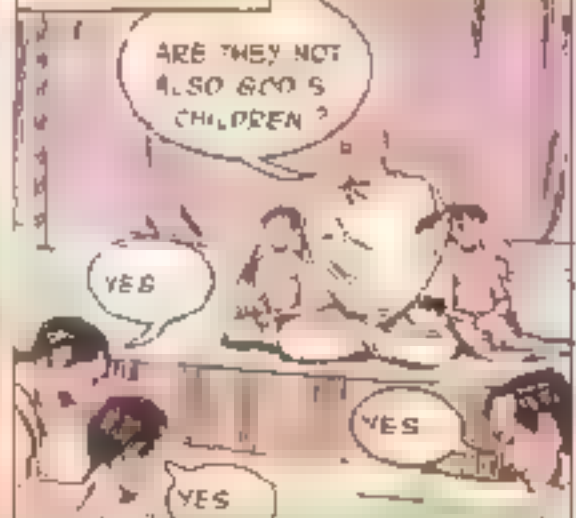
YOU CAN TELL THEM THAT WE HAVE METALICED AN EZHAVA GIVA



LEAVING THE SHIVARATRE FESTIVAL, THE GURU
TOOK SOME YUVA DEWANTS AND CHILDREN
WATCHING THE CEREMONY FROM A DISTANCE

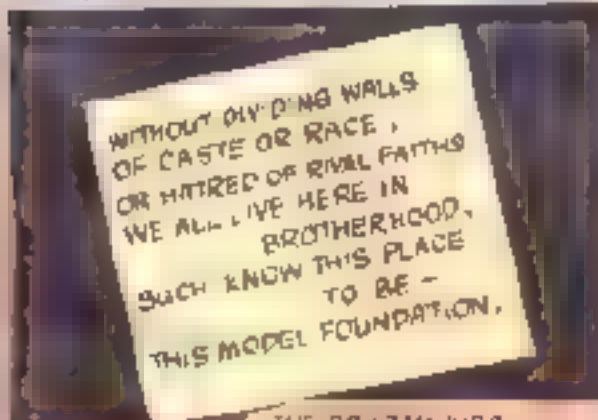


THE GURU HIMSELF MADE THE BOYS
SIT BESIDE HIM



PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS PUBLICLY TOOK PART IN AN EMBROIDERED JACKET TOO
THE GURU WOULD GENTLY INDICATE THAT HE HAD BEEN ALLOWED IN THE MAIN TEMPLES HE HAD
VISITED BEFORE HOW COULD HE BE ASKED TO REMAIN EQUAL WITH THE HIGHER CASTES UNLESS HE
FIRST CONSIDERED THE LOWER CASTES ONE EQUAL.

THE GURU ESTABLISHED HIS FIRST
ORDER IN THE YUVA DEWANT TEMPLE, ITS
NAME WAS DEWANT TEMPLE.



THE ASHRAM WAS
REGISTERED AS A SOCIAL ORGANISATION
AND NAMED THE YUVA DEWANT TEMPLE
ASSOCIATION.

EZHAVA AND PULIYA BOYS JOINED THE ASHRAM. THE
GURU PERSONALLY TRAINED HIS YOUNG DISCIPLES



THESE BOYS WOULD ONE DAY BECOME PRIESTS OF THE
HINDU TEMPLE AND CHANT THE SACRED SHLOKAS
AS PERFECTLY AS THE BRAHMINA PRIESTS DID.

IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME THAT
SWAMI VILEKANDADA MET ONE
DAY A DISTINGUISHED POLITICAL
LEADER, IN MYSORE

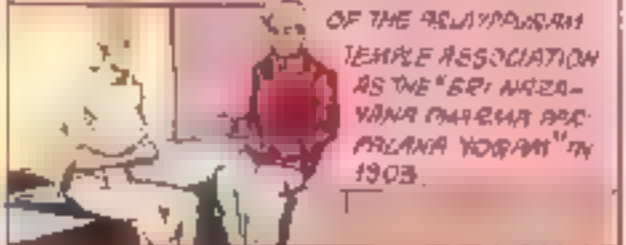
SWAMI, MY
NAME IS DR. PALPU.
YOU HAVE BEEN
HOW OUR PEOPLE
SUFFER SUCH
JUSTICE IT MUST
ALL BE CHANGED.
WHAT IS
YOUR
SAY?

RELIGIOUS FIGURE GUIDE
YOU IN YOUR
VENTURE

A RELIGIOUS FIGURE TO BE A VISIONARY
ONE WHO THAT SHOULD BE

TAKE UP
RELIGION TO
CURE RELIGION.
LET A

HE CAME TO MEET THE GURU, AND RELATED
HIS DREAM. IT WAS THIS DREAM THAT SAW THE
REESTABLISHMENT WITH THE GURU'S BLESSING



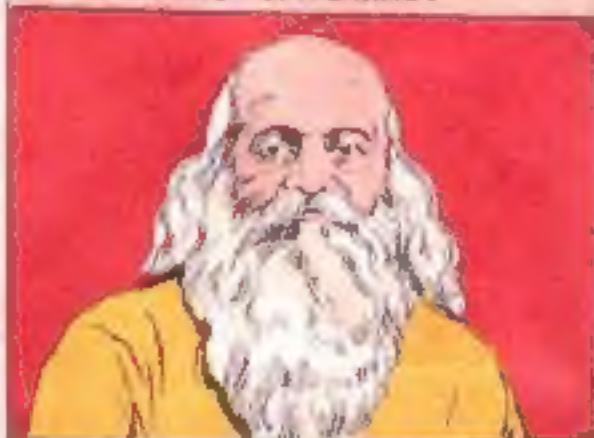
THE YUVA DEWANT TEMPLE ASSOCIATION, WHICH WAS
BRIHARZAVANA, SOON GATHERED MOMENTUM IN
THE MOVEMENT AGAINST MEANINGLESS CUSTOMS
AND CEREMONIES.

ONCE DE. PALPU BROUGHT WITH HIM HIS SECOND SON, AGED FOUR, WHOM THE GURU HAD NAMED 'NATARAJAN' WHEN HE WAS BORN. YOUNG NATARAJAN GREW UP UNDER THE GURU'S TUTELAGE.



MADHAVANA GURU SENT NATARAJAN TO SOERBONNE UNIVERSITY IN PARIS FOR HIGHER STUDIES. HE WAS TO BECOME THE GURU'S MOST DISTINGUISHED DISCIPLE.

NATARAJA GURU (1895-1971), A GURU IN HIS OWN RIGHT, FOUNDED THE GURUKULAM CENTRE CONCEIVED BY HIS GURU.



TODAY, THERE ARE MANY SUCH MODEL CENTRES IN INDIA AND ABROAD.

MADHAVANA GURU ALSO MET AT THIS TIME, A YOUNG POET NAMED KUMARAN ASAN.



IN LATER YEARS, KUMARAN, WITH INSPIRATION FROM THE GURU WROTE SOME OF THE GREATEST POETRY PRODUCED IN MALAYALAM AND CAME TO BE RECOGNISED AS A NATIONAL POET.

THE GURU'S TRAVELS CONTINUED. IN 1904, A MATH WAS ESTABLISHED AT SITAGIRI, VARANASI. THE ADVARITA ASHRAM, AT ALWAYE FOLLOWED TEN YEARS LATER - ALL SIMPLE, AUSTERE CENTRES.



AT SITAGIRI TOO IS AN IDOL OF THE BEAUTIFUL SARASWATI, THE GODDESS OF LEARNING, SYMBOLISING THE SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL AWAKENING OF MEN THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

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TO ADDRESS MAN'S PRAYER TO ONE GOD, MADHAVANA GURU TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES THE 'DARSA DASHAKAM' A PRAYER WHICH IS ADDRESSED TO GOD AND NOT TO ANY PARTICULAR DEITY.

MORE TEMPLES CAME UP LIKE THE JAGANNATHA TEMPLE AT TELUCHERRY AND THE SRIKRANTHESWAR TEMPLE AT CALICUT.



AT MURUKALAMPUZHA, NEAR THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, WAS CONSECRATED A SIMPLE, BRIGHT LAMP REVEALING IN MALAYALAM, THE WORDS, 'TRUTH, DHARMA, COMPASSION, LOVE'.



THERE IS NO NEED TO SPEND LAVISHLY WHILE BUILDING TEMPLES - WASTING MONEY ON FESTIVALS AND FIREWORKS.

A SCHOOL IS THE MAIN TEMPLE ON A SITE OF WORSHIP, SO THERE MUST BE ONE ATTACHED TO EVERY TEMPLE. THERE MUST ALSO BE FINE GARDENS, WELL-EQUIPPED LIBRARIES AND FACILITIES FOR INDUSTRIAL TRAINING.

ONCE, FOR A NEW TEMPLE AT NALANDAGRAM, SHERATTAY DISTRICT, THE GURU'S DEVOTEES GOT INTO A HEATED ARGUMENT. ONE GROUP WANTED AN IDOL INSTALLED. THE OTHER OPPOSED IT. FINALLY -



GURU, WHICH GROUP DO YOU AGREE WITH?

CAN YOU BEING ME A GOOD MIRROR?

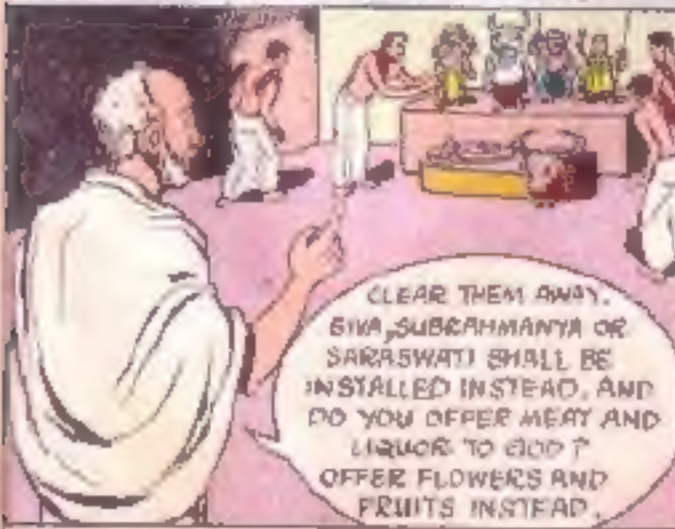
THOUGH PERPLEXED BY THEIR SAILING SWAMI'S STRANGE REQUEST, THE DEVOTEES BROUGHT THE MIRROR.

AND NEITHER AGREEING NOR DISAGREEING WITH EITHER GROUP, SWAMI INSTALLED THE MIRROR IN THE TEMPLE...



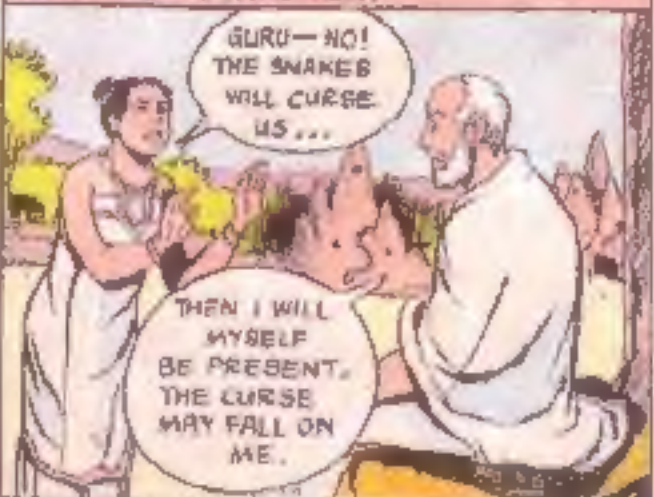
... REMINDING US THAT THE GOD-HEAD WATCHFULLY RESIDES IN OURSELVES, VERY TRUTH LIKE A CHANGE-LESS MIRROR, WHILE THE IMAGES IN THE MIRROR ARE EVER-CHANGING LIKE THE OUTSIDE WORLD OF OUR SENSES.

THE GURU'S SIMPLIFICATION OF CEREMONIES BROUGHT GREAT RELIEF TO IMPROVERISHED FAMILIES. THE GURU PERSONALLY PERFORMED MANY CHANGES. AT KOTTAK, HE HAD THIRTY-ONE ADAMTINE IDOLS REMOVED.



CLEAR THEM AWAY. GIVA, SUBRAHMANYA OR SARASWATI SHALL BE INSTALLED INSTEAD, AND DO YOU OFFER MEAT AND LIQUOR TO GOD? OFFER FLOWERS AND FRUITS INSTEAD.

TO CHANGE THE DEEPLY EMBEDDED RELIGIOUS BELIEFS WAS NOT AN EASY TASK. SCORNING THE SUPERSTITIONS THAT SNAKES CAUSE LEPROSY AND SAIN DISEASE, HE URGED ETHAVA FAMILIES WHO HAD SARPANAYUS* TO CLEAR THEM.



GURU- NO! THE SNAKES WILL CURSE US...

THEN I WILL MYSELF BE PRESENT. THE CURSE MAY FALL ON ME.

IT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO PREACH, PRACTICAL OPTIONS HAD TO BE SUGGESTED.

... BUT GURU TODDY-TAPPING IS OUR OCCUPATION. WHAT OTHER JOB CAN WE DO?

SPIN! MAKE KHADI FOR THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT. LIQUOR IS POISON. DON'T PRODUCE IT, DON'T VEND IT, DON'T CONSUME IT.

IN 1934, AN ALL-RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT ALWAYE ADWITA ASHRAM. LEADERS AND SCHOLARS REPRESENTING CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM, BUDDHISM, AND BOTH THE ARYA AND BRAHMO SAMAJAS TOOK PART IN IT.

OUR AIM AT THIS CONFERENCE IS NOT TO ARGUE ABOUT THE RELATIVE MERITS OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS. BUT TO LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER.

THE GURU HAD LONG NURSED THIS IDEA OF INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND NOW IT TOOK CONCRETE SHAPE. THE BASIC LINE OF ONENESS THAT RUNS THROUGH ALL RELIGIONS EMERGED CLEARLY AT THIS HISTORIC CONFERENCE.

THE GURU GREATLY ADMIRERD THE BUDDHA, AS ALSO JESUS CHRIST AND MUHAMMAD, ALL OF WHOM GAVE THE WORLD HIGH MORAL AND SOCIAL VALUES. HE MET AND TALKED WITH CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES, DISCUSSED THE GURU WITH MULLAS AND TWICE VISITED SRI LANKA, MEETING MANY BUDDHIST MONKS THERE. HE HAD GONE DEEP INTO HINDUISM, THE RELIGION HE WAS BORN INTO AND EVERY OTHER WORLD RELIGION AND SAW THE SAME TRUTH IN ALL OF THEM. THIS MADE THE IDEA OF CONVERSION SENSELESS TO HIM. ON ONE OCCASION—

GURU, HINDUISM HAS BEEN THE CAUSE OF GREAT SUFFERING FOR US. OFTEN I FEEL THAT ALL EZHAVAS SHOULD BECOME CONVERTS TO BUDDHISM.

WHY NOT CONVERT HINDUISM INSTEAD?

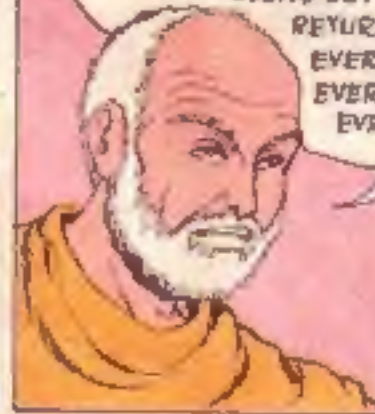
ALL RELIGIONS ARE THE HERITAGE OF THE WORLD, EACH EQUALLY RIGHT. WHATEVER BE THE RELIGION OF AN INDIVIDUAL, WHAT MATTERS IS THAT HE IS GOOD.

IN 1934 WAS CONDUCTED THE GREAT VAIKAM SATYAGRAHA, BACKED BY GANDHIJI. THIS SATYAGRAHA DEMANDED ENTRY FOR SLACKS INTO COWDS LEADING TO TEMPLES. T.A. MATHAYAN, A DEVOTED ADMIRER OF THE GURU WAS THE BACKBONE OF THE MOVEMENT. THE GURU'S ENCOURAGEMENT GAVE ADDED IMPETUS TO THE SATYAGRAHA.



IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO USE THE ROADS. YOU SHOULD ENTER THE TEMPLES. IF THEY PUT UP A FENCE, CROSS IT. IF YOU ARE BEATEN, BEAR THE BLOW BUT DO NOT RETURN THEM.

EVERYBODY ENTER EVERY TEMPLE, EVERYDAY.



WHEN RAJINDRANATH TAGORE MET THE GURU AT SIRAGURI—

I HAVE TRAVELLED FAR AND WIDE. NEVER HAVE I MET SUCH A GREAT SOUL AMONG THE RELIGIOUS MEN OF INDIA.



GANDHIJI TOO HAD A MEETING WITH THE GURU.

ALL IS BEAUTIFUL HERE—THE EVENING PRAYER THE TEMPLE, THE SURROUNDINGS.



THE GIST OF MATHAYAN GURU'S LEGACY TO MAN IS CONTAINED IN A STANZA OF ONE OF THE MANY BEAUTIFUL POEMS THAT HE WROTE.

OF ONE KIND, OF ONE FAITH,
OF ONE GOD IS MAN,
OF ONE WOMB, OF ONE FORM,
HERE, DIFFERENCE THERE
IS NONE.

AND IN THIS ODE TO COMPASSION (ARUKAMPARASAKAM) HE GIVES A MANTRA COMMON FOR ALL: "ONLY HE LIVES WHO LOVES!"

ABSORPTION IN THE ABSOLUTE.



NARAYANA ATTAINED MAHATMA SAMADHI ON SEPTEMBER 20, 1928. HIS SAMADHI AT SIRAGURI IS A CENTRE OF PILGRIMAGE FOR ALL THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HUMAN FREEDOM AND EQUALITY.